STEVIE STUNS LAKE

Sonar Reveals Lair of Lake Monster

Lab Confirms Exlusive News Photos Authentic

Page 4

MONTEREY *NEWS*

Volume IV, Number 1 "Whatever" April 1, 1995

Constable Tireiron shoves suspect into car

SHOOTER SUBDUED

TOWN CENTER EXPOSED TO RAMPAGE

Page 3

WALTER WINS BIG

Page 8

RETAIL GIANT MARCHES ON PARADE GROUND

By N. Rich Menthe
(Special to the *Monterey News*)

MARGARETHA LEONARDO

Wal-mart Veep Johnny Q. Ball looks over proposed megastore site. He said the stone will be preserved as the centerpiece of an atrium fountain. Monterey Masonry has bid the job. Ball said, "What do they think we are, rich?"

MONTEREY Lee and Great Barrington got thumbs down, but Monterey appears to be on the winning end of retail giant Wal-mart's latest move.

In hopes of reviving Monterey's old town center at the junction of Beartown and Fairview Roads, Wal-mart's Vice President of Corporate Affairs, Johnny Q. Ball, has announced that construction of a new supercenter will begin late August, 1995.

The superstore will feature a 14-aisle supermarket, a pharmacy, an auto service shop, a dry cleaner, a beauty parlor, a tax preparer, a video rental shop, and a Bank of Boston branch. Plans to include McDonalds were scrapped because of the town's vegetarian bylaws.

Ball said the location, the old parade ground, just south of the Rev. Adonijah Bidwell's house and the town's first church, is perfect, given founder Sam Walton's dedication to basic American values. "The Reverend can rest easy with us," said Ball.

Downtown merchants and several villagers have banded together in opposition to the move. However, recent laws passed by the new Congress override local laws inhibiting

business growth, and have forced the merchants to take strident measures.

A reliable source said that Postmaster Walter Barks has vowed to charge the giant more than just 32¢ for an ounce of mail—and he says they will have to ask if they want a receipt.

Opponents refused to divulge other strategies.

When asked why Monterey was chosen for the new megastore, given that it doesn't fit Wal-mart's normal retail profile, Ball explained, "We see promise in Monterey. It's halfway between Otis and Sandisfield, right? Plus, there's talk of a connector to the Mass Pike."

Those in favor of the Wal-mart coming to Monterey said this would give the town a much-needed boost in its tax base, which would hasten the building of a new town hall and civic center.

Although Wal-mart neighbor Ian Jenkins acknowledged that having Wal-mart across the street would be convenient, he held firm that he opposed the move. "Over my dead body," was his comment.

Wal-mart said they believed that would not be necessary, and instead offered Jenkins a special opening day discount on their Gitano jeans.

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BODEGA

Suspect Leonardo lets loose as she's hauled off

SHOOTING SPREE ENDS IN DARK ROOM

Authorities douse lights at interrogation

AB New Service

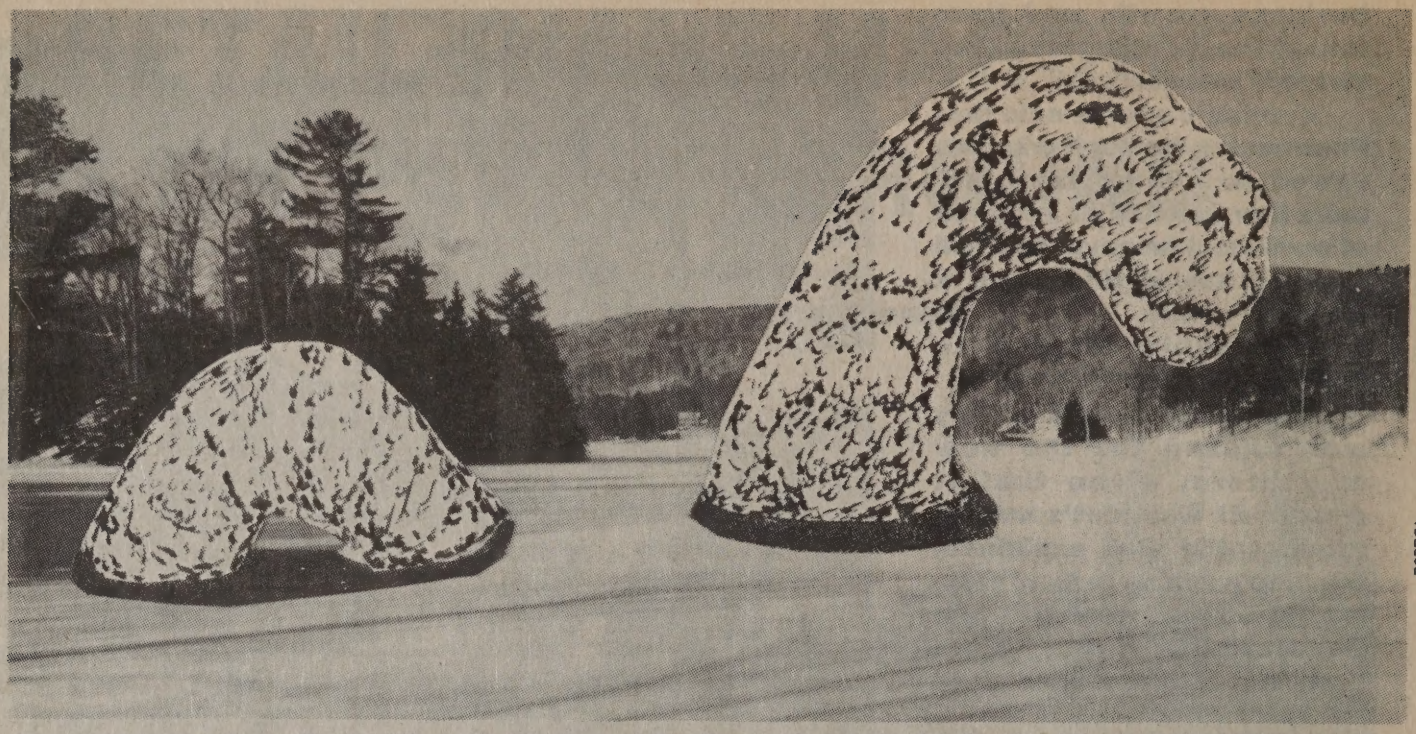
MONTEREY The rapid click of an automatic split the cold morning stillness in front of the General Store on Tuesday. The boys rushed from the back of the store, where they were talking things over before the start of the business day, and found a blond shooting up the town center.

Constable R. W. ("Raid") Tireiron advanced on her calmly. "Cap it, sweetheart," he said softly, disarming her without violence. She lowered her shooter, which appeared to be an automatic on a strap. But when Raid went for the bags slung over her shoulders, she snapped.

The onlooker heard her scream, "Don't be so negative!" as Tireiron forced her into the waiting wagon.

Reporters were barred from the dimly lit interrogation room, and no transcript was available at press time.

A wallet turned up at the scene, with ID for one Margaretha Leonardo. "These foreign types are going to give us a bad image," said store owner Main Yard, shaking his head.



BODEGA

"It was early morning, still cold. When the thing turned, I split—and fast, but not before I got the shot," said photographer Bodega. "I think it was after my camera. 'No way, pal!' I called over my shoulder." Bodega was paid an undisclosed six-figure sum from owner Murdock's personal account for this unretouched photo of Stevie.

DID SONAR SPAWN STEVIE?

Role of chemical weed-killer questioned

by
MariKade

MONTEREY Some Stevens Lake residents are hanging up their fishing gear while others are polishing up their canoes, preparing for tourists.

"It's all because of the Sonar," a Conservation Commission member whined. "Nault had already raised questions about several dark spots on the bottom of the lake. He thought they might be the entrance to some kind of underwater cave." Lake resident R. Nault was told that the dark spots were submerged tree trunks, but he was unconvinced.

Recently, lake vegetation all but vanished, so the dark spots could be investigated. However, what with the poking and prodding, the lake became murky, and the investigating team withdrew to the grassy area below the Nault's house for a picnic.

Between the first course (lobster bisque) and the salad, a surge and commotion under the water drew the crew and all of the Stevens Lake year-round householders to the edge of the lake—and then over the edge of credulity. With a series of thunderous roars, a long, sinuous, almost prehistoric creature swam to the surface and circled the 32-acre lake nine times. Nine! Scientists figure the creature had been hibernating in the underwater caves originally postulated by Nault.

Stevens Lake homeowners have named the thing "Stevie." It seems friendly, but was unwilling even to taste the bisque. Paddling tours are being organized for the summer tourist season.

Skepticism of local residents persists, despite a report from Kodak Labs, where photos were analyzed and declared to be genuine images.

"BELLE" WINS PRELIM OK

DJIG is up for expanded development program

by
Annie-Bet Wiggins
(Special to the *Monterey News*)

Casino gambling in Monterey—that's the proposal from the Diamond Jim Investment Group (DJIG) given preliminary approval by the Select Board February 29. DJIG will locate the casino in an old riverboat ("The Bidwell Belle") moored in the middle of Lake Garfield.

Town Counsel cautioned that the floating palace might not be subject to town regulation. "Boston sees the open ocean," said Attorney Huge Cowlick. "They forget we live in the hills out here."

By granting preliminary approval, the town hopes to gain control of the project. "We aren't about to let them fund the Central Artery with tax revenues that rightfully belong to us," fumed P.D. Bruno, Select Board Chair. "We'll draw it down," he vowed.

Still, the Board had some tough questions for DJIG spokesman Jim Brady, who tried to alleviate concerns over the message sent to the town's young people. He called for the establishment of Gambling Awareness and Resistance Education (GARE) programs in the high schools. GARE counselors are legion in Las Vegas and Atlantic City, where few school-age children are found in casinos—"A testament to the success of these programs," said Brady.

"Anyway," he went on, "gambling's only part of the picture. We're planning shipboard movies, band concerts, video games, shuffleboard, and pleasure cruises." At this point Mr. Brady asked the Board if he might share a dream with them, a dream of cruises from

Lake Garfield to Brewer Pond, and thence down the Konkapot to the town center, where he envisions a Nature Theme Park, expressive of all that we treasure in Monterey. Negotiations, he said, (subject to approval at Town Meeting, of course) are already in train with the Army Corps of Engineers for dredging the Konkapot and cutting back the banks to allow riverboat passage. A lock will be needed between the Little Lake and Brewer Pond, and the course of the river will have to be straightened somewhat.

"Hmm," said Select Board member Steve Groats. Jim could tell that Steve shared his excitement at this prospect, and could visualize, as he could, restaurants, galleries, and antique shops springing up to make Monterey a mecca for nature tourists.

"I want you to know," finished Brady, "that I journeyed throughout Berkshire County seeking a venue, and when I saw Monterey, it was as if a voice spoke to me, saying 'This is the place, Diamond Jim. Monterey is *the* special place where Jim Brady's dream will find its home.'"

In the days following the Board's vote, the *News* sampled local opinion. "They're kidding," was the only response from Soo Su Loo, a local goat farmer in to pick up a few days' mail. A resident who refused to give his name said, "I kenew it. I just knew it. First it's scratch cards at the General Store. Now this! I'll *sell* my place."

Farther afield, school officials seemed intrigued by the prospect of state-mandated GARE programs in the area. "That's what makes Massachusetts education what it is," was the comment from a Mount Everett teacher named Reliable Source. A School Committee member, who preferred anonymity, said "This is right in tune with the school's commitment to preparing kids for the real world. We're doing the job right—you can bet on it!"

No, but seriously...

Q: WHERE DOES A 2,000-POUND GORILLA SLEEP?

A: ANYWHERE IT WANTS TO.

DEMOCRATS STUDY SMALL TOWN MANAGEMENT

Part VII:

Impartial Guides to Policy

School Committee Representative

It was a pleasure to meet with our School Committee Representative, who helps guide educational policy. Her involvement with educational issues and her comprehension of present programs and problems is impressive and reassuring. The School Committee seems cooperative and friendly toward parents, teachers, students, and school administration alike. All work together with a sense of decency and trust, which prevails throughout Mount Everett Regional.

The regional school district is comprised of five very different towns. Acting together from widely different economic bases presents a formidable problem as we confront constantly changing educational and financial situations.

State mandates focus on urban more than rural needs, leaving local school administration to work within an ill-fitting, state-imposed structure while trying to find resources other than state to support our children's development. They have done just this in the Odyssey Program, for which they sought and received much outside support. It involves supervised student choice of subject, long classroom meetings, and the study of one broad subject for a period of months. There is also a strong faculty re-training program. Odyssey is designed to shift from "teaching passive learners" to an emphasis on "active learners working under the guidance of knowledgeable teachers." This reflects John Dewey's philosophy, which is deeply embedded in every serious educator's mind.

Some parents still express doubts that the Odyssey Program prepares students sufficiently to meet college requirements and achieve high SAT scores. Some students transfer out of Odyssey to other schools. However, the guidance counselor claims that an equal number of students come into the program.

Students and staff agree that they would not want to return to the traditional schedule and approach. Students feel motivated to learn, and there seems to be a deeper student-faculty understanding. Independent evaluation has documented a rise in student averages in all disciplines together with an honor roll increase from 20% to 40%.

Teachers, parents and students alike deserve support and encouragement in facing the challenges of the Odyssey Program.

Monterey's financial responsibility to the district is uncertain because this year's budget is not yet firm. Prompt passage by the state of the "Early Resolution on Local Aid" would help towns prepare their budgets. Taxes may not afford sufficient support in the near future. If help is not forthcoming from the state, new solutions must be found.

The charts below compare costs of regional districts and neighboring towns:

Cost Per Student in Regional Districts

	'91/'92	'92/'93
Central Berk	$5,040	$5,250
Lee	4,967	5,277
South Berk	5,352	5,558
Berk Hills	6,263	6,427
Lenox	6,703	6,689
Mt.Greylock	6,104	7,856

SBRSD Proposed Budget, 1995-96

	Op. Cost	Cap.	Total
Alfd	$236,692	$96,718	$335,410
Mntry	549,091	193,830	742,921
Egrmt	854,093	185,980	1,040,073
N Mar	1,101,341	223,062	1,324,403
Shfld	2,822,563	303,242	3,125,805

An open meeting with our School Committee Representative, the Finance Board, and the Select Board will be held on April 28 at 7 p.m. in the Town Offices. This is the one forum in which our representative can provide detailed information to townspeople about current School Committee activity and general educational news. The presence of the other boards offers an opportunity to discuss the entire town budget as well.

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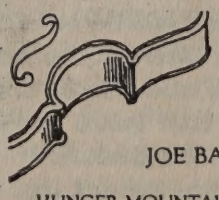
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Town Clerk

The Office of Town Clerk is that of public record; the clerk conveys legislative information to the townspeople, and from the town to the state. A series of quotes from *What is a Town Clerk?*, (William Eastman Associates, pub. by the Mass. Town Clerks Assoc.) will provide an overview of the office:

The office of Town Clerk...can be compared to a legal hub around which the wheel of local government revolves. The spokes of the wheel represent the various boards, departments and committees within the government to which the Town Clerk relates in a direct way. The rim of the wheel represents the many segments of State and County Government from which many of the Town Clerk's official duties and responsibilities stem.

And yet, despite the fact that the General Court, over the years, has added constantly to the duties, complexities, problems, authorities, and responsibilities of the office, it no longer enjoys, in much of New England, the standing and prestige in local government it once held.

Part of the reason for this anachronistic situation lies in the dual nature of the position itself, since the Town Clerk function is spelled out in a bewildering morass of both Town By-Laws and State Statutes. Paid by the Town, the Clerk is nevertheless responsible in critical areas *not to the Town* [emphasis added] but to the State or County.

Of equal importance, because the office is elective, no provisions have been made...that compensation for the position is commensurate with the increasing responsibilities...

The Town Clerk's position as it stands today, can best be described as a curious blending of official duties and responsibilities as spelled out in 73 chapters and 451 sections of the General Laws, and the By-Laws of the 312 towns in the Commonwealth; semiofficial duties and responsibilities which custom and practice have evolved over the years and which vary somewhat from town to town; and finally, unofficial but vital functions which Town Clerks perform because of a natural tendency of citizens to seek out the Town Clerk as a source for information, aid or assistance in regard to almost any aspect of town affairs, services or functions.

In the case of Town Meetings, failure to comply with literally hundreds of legal requirements can often invalidate actions taken by the citizens in town meetings or cause challenges which result in court actions and unfortunate publicity. Likewise, failure to observe any one of the hundreds of laws relating to the registration of voters, the conduct of elections or the certification of results can and often does erupt in legal problems and again, unfavorable headlines.

The problems of legalities would be relatively simple were it not for the fact that the laws are being changed constantly.

Since it is a statutory requirement that Town Clerks must receive advance copies of all new or amended laws, clerks must spend an inordinate amount of time just trying to understand the laws so that they can comply fully with them. In addition, most Clerks accept as an added responsibility, notifying officers, Boards and Committees of changes in the law which affect them or their operations.

One of the vital legal responsibilities of Town Clerks...involves action taken by the voters in Town Meetings. ... Certification must be made by the Town Clerk for every dollar voted. The Town Clerk must witness the signatures of the Selectmen and Treasurer on the Annual Bond; he [or she, as in Monterey] must certify the article as it appeared in the warrant; certify the article as voted by the Town Meeting; certify the warrant and vote to the bank which accepts the bond and certify to the Departments of Taxation and Accounts that all certification procedure. have been performed as prescribed by law.

Both the authority and accountability of the Town Clerk are absolute concerning elections.

In addition to all of the above, the state has implemented a new system of storing public records on computer to increase availability and facilitate their use by the state. Information which has languished in files will now be "on-line." Government uses may include motor-voter and personal property records, mortgages for large equipment, and registration of business certificates, among many others.

Town Clerks try to protect citizens by employing a paid lobbyist who keeps in touch with legislative activity and supports compatibility with home rule. Our Town Clerk belongs to the Massachusetts Town Clerks Association, which gives an exam qualifying for the award of Certified Massachusetts Municipal Clerk. The Interr ational Institute of Municipal Clerks awards the designation "Certified Municipal Clerk." Our Town Clerk has earned both certificates.

— Melvene Dyer-Bennet
Vice Chair, Democratic Party

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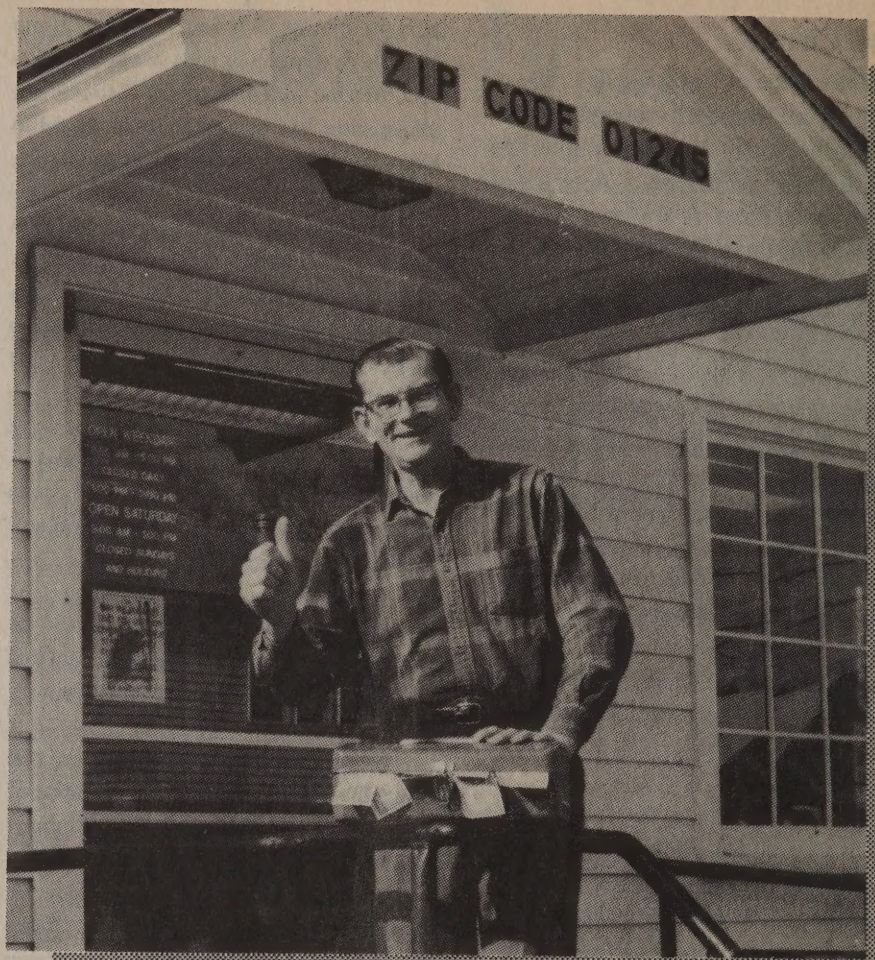

MARGARETHA LEONARDO

MEGABUCKS! $10 BILLION SPLIT

"Won't change my life" vows Walter Barks

by MariKade

MONTEREY "It was a bargain," Walter Barks said of his third of the winning ticket. "It was only 32¢. And, I'm getting change back." His winnings total $3,333,333,333.33 over the next four years.

"It won't change my life," Barks vowed. But he did say he's always wanted to tour Pittsfield.

"I won't be taking time off from my job as Monterey Postmaster," he said. "But," he added after a short pause to polish the twinkle in his eye, "I might just buy the post office."

When asked what he would do with the building, Barks looked surprised. "Oh, I didn't mean the building," he said. "I meant the U.S. Postal Service."

CRONE CRACKS CODE

Heavens help her

by
Crafty Crone
(Special Celestial Correspondent)

"Library? Schedule's been the same for at least 12 years!" Thus spoke former *News* editor Dad McAllstar on a Monday evening last month. On that day, with the moon in the seventh house and Jupiter aligned with Fritz, McAllstar unwittingly gave the Crone a clue to the tie-in between the library schedule and the twelve signs of the astrological zodiac.

Have you ever wondered why is the library is open in the morning on Mondays?

Traditionally, Monday is called the Moon's day, but, according to a newly disclosed theory this first day of the work week also corresponds to the first zodiac sign, Aries. The library is open evenings on that day for Aries and all other the fire-sign folks who like to read books after they're done looking at the sun.

Tuesdays are dedicated to Taurus, the slowest-moving of the signs. The library opens early, so Taurus can get home again before dark.

The Wednesday schedule is esoteric. On this day, dedicated to Mercury (mascot of communications and all things which change) it takes hours to decide whether or not to open. By the time all sides of the debate have been aired, it's well after noon. Hence, three-to-five on Wednesdays.

On Thursdays and Fridays the moon is usually void, of course, which is a terrible time to make decisions. To relieve the stress on Montereyans, the library doors are kept closed. Therefore on Saturdays, dedicated to excessively responsible Saturn, the library is open twice, out of guilt.

On Sundays everyone stays home with his or her family, and tries to remember the library hours for the coming week. The library is closed.

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MURDOCK SAVES *NEWS*

Mogul snaps up local rag

by
E. Anne Jenkins

MONTEREY Smiling broadly, Boomer McAllstar, Chairperson of the *Monterey News* Board of Directors, announced today that international media monger Rube Murdock had stepped forward as a White Knight to rescue the *News* from corporate raider Taddy Tenure. Editor Pedro Bodega, still shaken, was stirred to confirm that Murdock will not require editorial changes.

Sources revealed that growing financial success had recently enticed the Board to attempt to take the *News* private. Financing for the buyout had been arranged with the investment bank GBS&L of Boston and Barrington. The deal included floating high yield bonds through outlets in South Berkshire. Prospects were considered excellent. The paper had achieved dominance in arcane Nature articles, Third Wave channeling, dense poetry, and obfuscation reports combined with raw political journalism (which recently uncovered a *scandal*.) Board members felt "the sky was the limit."

Word of the pending buyout may have been leaked by a fearful town official to occasional second-home residents, afraid that an independent, privately owned paper might threaten the status quo.

Once the deal was out, the *News* was not legally "in play," and other bidders could challenge the Board's buyout with offers of their own. This is when Tenure stepped in with his offer. Lawyers for the Board had devised a "poison pill" defense, and were on their way to Wilmington, Delaware, to defend the *News* in court when Murdock stepped forward with a generous offer. Stating that his only interest was "preservation of established cultural institutions [Grange, Philergians, Roadside Store, etc.]," Murdock expressed a sense of "solidarity with the heritage embodied in the *News*." His offer of financial support and backing of the Board stemmed the Tenure stampede, which is attempting to gain a foothold for the media empire in southern New England.

A last-minute threat to the deal was posed by Tenure. He claimed that if Murdock bought the *News*, it would constitute foreign ownership, violating FCC rules. An aggressive two-pronged response averted the issue: local realtors sold Murdock a three-season cottage on the lake at below-market rates, giving him resident status, and a Georgia Congressman had a chat with the Atlanta-based Tenure.

GROATS NIXES CHEESECAKE

News columnist Steffie Groats denied rumors that her "Poisonal Notes" feature would move to the centerfold pages accompanied by cheesecake photos as a result of the Murdock rescue.

"We had a talk. He doesn't quite get it, but around here everybody already knows everything about everybody. We're naked now. What would be the point? Besides, who has the time to sort through any more submissions?" she asked.

"Hats off, Steffie!" congratulated *News* Board Chair Boomer McAllstar.

OK, BACK TO REALITY...

THE TOWN

ELEANOR KIMBERLY

At the meeting of the Select Board on March 27, sealed bids were opened for the possible purchase of a Class A fire truck and equipment for the Fire Department. Bid prices included trade-in for the Fire Company's used truck, as follows: Bell-Herring, Inc., of Newburgh, New York, $287,890, less $10,000 trade-in, for a final price of $277,890; New England Fire Equipment & Apparatus of Stratford, Connecticut, $303,528, less $15,000 trade-in, for a final price of $288,528; Greenwood Fire Apparatus, Inc., of North Attleboro, Massachusetts, $304,681, less $8,000 trade-in, for a final price of $296,681.

After noting the high cost of the new equipment, Select Board member Georgiana O'Connell stated that the purchase of new fire equipment is recommended by the Town's insurance company. The bids were given to Fire Chief Ray Tryon for review, and he will announce his finding at a later date.

Select Board member Georgiana O'Connell (along with Planning Board members Joyce Scheffey and Maggie Leonard) recently attended a breakfast forum convened to discuss the new Title 5 regulations governing home and commercial waste-disposal systems. The forum was sponsored by the Berkshire County Regional Planning Commission, 1,000 Friends of Massachusetts, and the Berkshire County Land Use Commission. O'Connell said that all members of the Select Board have attended seminars to familiarize themselves with the new Title 5 regulations, which go into effect on March 31. They are designed to protect wetlands and water supplies with larger setbacks and stricter inspection standards, while also allowing new waste disposal and percolation technologies. The new regulations may result in some lots which previously did not perc becoming buildable.

Police Chief Gareth Backhaus met with the Select Board to request that the Board increase the police-detail hourly rate in order to maintain a uniform detail rate in this area. It was unanimously voted by the Select Board to set the police-detail hourly rate at $24 per hour. At a later meeting Chief Backhaus and Todd Moriarty, a candidate for appointment to the Monterey Police Department, met with the Select Board. The Board unanimously voted that Moriarty be appointed a conditional officer of the Monterey Police Department, pending the satisfactory completion of his required training.

— Maggie Leonard

REPUBLICANS CAUCUS

On March 11 the Republicans caucused and nominated the following candidates for the upcoming local elections: Cynthia Weber, Board of Appeals; Gerry Shapiro, Board of Assessors; Peter Brown, Board of Selectmen; Rudy Gero, Cemetery Commission; Jed Lipsky, Finance Committee; Anne Marie Makuc and Will Marsh, Library Trustees; Jim Thomas, Parks Commission; Donna Burkhart, School Committee; Henry Makuc, Tax Collector; Maryellen Brown, Treasurer; Ray Tryon, Constable; Mark Makuc, Moderator; and Roger Tryon, Tree Warden.

At the committee meeting preceding the caucus, we decided to rent a space and table at the Fire Company tag sale in the pavilion this June for some long-overdue fund-raising. Tom Thorn agreed to lead the project, and we will be happy to accept any donations of saleable items or cash.

— Mark Makuc

CONCLUSION

Grey morning
My breath-held day
Grim in certain sorrow,
End of era mourning.
Noble, patient head and eye
Turn and stare in trust
I begin the final beat
Mumble, shiver and sigh

My forehead rests
On huge black flanks
Closing loss
Dulls fertile pulse.

A friend comes striding,
Rough and smiling,
To laugh and elbow aside,
Despair.
For a moment.

Now a second comrade bears
The wait, spread dull and slack.
So three share brittle laughter
Till memories nestle near.
To whisper.
Imminent tears.

Sudden rattle
Diesel whine.
Startled cattle
Stiffened spine.
Ramp and gate slam and scrape.
Clamorous clatter
Coaxing, prodding, pushing,
Ponderous, panicked beasts.
Bedlam and bravado stifle pain
almost
Soft bewildered eyes
Lock on me through the row
Rack my unmasked heart.
Awful, probing cries.

Then three we stand, stunned,
In wide-spaced tableau.
Mud and mist surround
The swaying life-load.
Moist snouts seek,
With plaintive bray and bellow
Answers from the air

All have left.
In sightless silence
I stare down the road.
Grief screws out
Surges from eyes and throat.
Clench of anguish
A final, sad salute
To a dream's ultimate retreat.

Slip and shake
In secret, solemn visions
Held in heart and words
Smile in peace
For quiet, conscious friends
Who shared
These somber shifts

— Nick Hardcastle

SNOW TIDE

On the south slope
There is a slow advance and retreat
As the winter goes on.
The hillside turns bare and brown
In warm weather
Only to have the white cover
Creep up again in the next snow.

When I'm full of winterzest,
I'm happy to see the soft duvet
Pulled up for another hill-sleep.
When I'm yearning for spring
I cheer on the tease as the hill
Shows a little more, a little more...

—David P. McAllester

THE WATER HOLE

At the northern end of the farm
The water hole is plain to see.
It tells the signs of the seasons
A calendar good enough for me.

When the ice is gone about April,
Two mallards come back to review
Where they raised their young last summer,
Their old home now to renew.

Pussy willows peep shyly out
To see if winter has really gone,
The red winged black bird is there again,
Singing his same old song.

My friends are coming back.
They have been away for a time.
Now that they have returned
All things are in rhyme.

We wait to hear the peepers,
They have been heard other places I'm told.
Spring does not come for us
Until they are heard at the water hole.

And the coot is trying to nest
In the poplars across the way.
Cusses me when I go by,
I wonder what angry ducks say?

Working nearby in Summer,
Thirsty and watching for rain,
Jug-a-rum we heard from the water hole
Makes us thirsty all over again.

Autumn leaves come whispering down,
Beautiful, soft, and so still.
Old timers tell me winter won't come
Until swamps and water holes fill.

Passing by in the Winter,
It is covered with ice and snow.
All of my friends are sleeping now,
Waiting for Spring to say, 'Go!'

— Sheldon Fenn

ESCAPED TO THE BERKSHIRES

More exotic than the moose reported
near the dump, the mountain lion
seen atop the cobble, more
than waves of weekenders fast-
walking down the middle of the main
road, head-sets tuning out
the vireos, are these aliens.

Mornings they float across our path
like nothing dreamed at Jacob's Pillow,
trailing great panaches black
as trumpeter's ties at Tanglewood,
as wrought iron gates before
a gilded cottage, as latches fixed
to white meetinghouse doors.

Two strange squirrels escaped,
they say, a nearby zoo, begin
to propagate, perhaps to over-run
like Long Islanders. Awe stands
up at every sighting, leaves
us knowing nothing native is
more graced, acknowledging ourselves
are fugitives among these hills.

— Roy Shepard

SOLID WASTE COMMITTEE

This is an updated version of an article written February 16 for the March issue of the News. *Computer-enhanced human error and oversight prevented its timely publication, for which the Editor and staff duly apologize.*

You will by now have noticed significent changes at the Transfer Station. This is evolutionary (not to say revolutionary) change. We have been working and meeting with the Selectmen and among ourselves since August in an effort to upgrade our recycling program while keeping our cost down, and after much discussion and review we decided to try a new hauling service, the Master Garbologist of New Marlborough. The goal is to introduce to Monterey a system of super-efficient recycling which will be both easy and cost effective.

We have worked out certain innovations with Joe and Robin Mallory of the Master Garbologist. They have provided new recycling information sheets available at the transfer station. As soon as you drive up, you will see that the operation is now one-stop. All bins and containers are located near the compactor. We will be accepting new items for recycling (listed below) as well as continuing with the bottles and cans, plastics, paper, and metal programs already in place.

You will also find a new walk-in container for paper, which is always the major portion of recylables. This walk-in should make for more compact, and therefore fewer, loads. As paper no longer shares space with bottles and cans, our hauling fees should go down considerably. However, the new system requires that you put your newspapers and magazines in brown paper bags or cartons to keep the container tidy and dense, so it leaves Monterey with a full load. The container holds five tons. Our first load weighed nearly four tons—not bad for the first try.

You will notice a small container for the disposal of bottles and cans. The attendant will sort its contents first, then empty it into the large container, thus reducing the risk of contaminants and breakage, which will improve our recycling rate and further reduce costs. (It will also spare the attendant having to climb into the large container to remove contaminants, as has been done in the past.) The plastics container is now covered, and located next to the other containers—no more crossing the roadway, dodging traffic.

We plan to have a swap table and charities program in place soon.

The following items will now be accepted, but please check with the attendant before depositing:

Used motor oil,
Used oil filters
Used anti-freeze
Used car batteries, (not flashlight or household)
Paint thinner (not paint)
Used tires (a small but necessary fee for these)
Plastic flower pots (not flats and packs; return those to garden store)

It is with regret that we bid farewell to Bob Gatten, who declined to seek employment with our new hauler. We wish Bob every success in his new job. To show there are no hard feelings he has already been to see the refurbished setup and offered Rex Johnson, our new transfer station attendant, some friendly tips. Rex is a robust and cheerful individual who is eager to guide you through the routine procedures and answer any questions you may have.

Alert! We plan to put an article on the warrant for Household Hazardous Waste Collection. You may want to start saving hazardous items now, should the article pass. (Please see article on page of this issue.) Explanatory information wheels purchased by the District are still available at the Town Hall.

We hope very much that you will share your comments and ideas with the Solid Waste Committee (Wayne Burkhart, Rudy Gero, Bill Kopetchny, Joyce Scheffey, Bob Thieriot) or the Selectmen.

— Joyce Scheffey

LAEL'S MOUNTAIN BIKE DELIVERY SERVICE

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--Store errands; convenience items
--Delivery to elders, shut-ins
--Scheduled pick-up/drop-off
--Lunch delivery to construction sites
--Messages, inter-business parts and papers

528-5417

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WARRANT ARTICLE ON HAZARDOUS WASTE COLLECTION

The Southern Berkshire Solid Waste Management District has asked its member towns to assess local interest in collecting household hazardous waste. Each town will put an article on the warrant for its Annual Town Meeting requesting funds to support such a program. The article for Monterey has been prepared and will appear.

Household hazardous waste includes: anything labeled "Caution," or "Keep out of the Reach of Children;" remedies for exposure or ingestion; acids, antifreeze, art materials (turps, acetone, lacquers, etc.), household batteries (alkaline, ni-cad, button cells, etc.), paints, varnish, shellac, flea and tick products, oven cleaner, floor wax, furniture polish, kerosene, pool chemicals, fungicides, herbicides, insecticides, wood preservatives, poisons, drain cleaners, tub and tile cleaners. It is dangerous to dispose of these things by ordinary means, and illegal to place them in landfills. Many of you may have been storing these items in anticipation of a proper disposal program.

The cost of providing local household hazardous waste collection has not been included in the SBSWMD budget; each town must come up with its share. The price for first-time collection (which may entail disposal of stored waste) has been set at $100 per car, or $3 per resident. Sheffield is setting aside $12,000, which will mean they can accept 120 cars. We are asking that Monterey raise and appropriate $3,000, enough money to accept thirty cars, or a sum roughly equivalent to $3 per resident. Proper disposal of hazardous waste is expensive, but the real cost of continued inappropriate disposal may be far greater. The article proposed for Monterey provides that any money not used for the disposal program will remain in the General Fund, and not be unnecessarily swallowed up.

These are difficult times. Our budget is extremely tight: the school assessment looms, there's an article on the warrant for a new fire truck—and these are just two heavy-duty items that I happen to know of. My fear is that with so many pressing expenses many of you will feel that disposing of hazardous household waste is not all that important. "After all," one might think, "we've been dumping this stuff for years, and are none the worse for it." But we *are* the worse for it, and it won't get better until we start cleaning up after ourselves.

I hope Monterey will support this article along with the other towns in our district.

— Joyce Scheffey

DISPOSAL AREA HOURS

Summer hours for the Monterey Disposal Area will commence on Sunday, April 2, 1995, as follows:

SUNDAY	10 a.m.–6 p.m.
WED (unchanged)	8 a.m.–1 p.m.
SAT (unchanged)	8 a.m.–1 p.m.

Applications for authorized users' vehicles may be obtained at the Town Hall any time; completed applications, together with fee, may be mailed or left at the Town Hall. The sticker will be mailed to the applicant.

— Peter S. Brown, Chair
Stefan Grotz
Georgiana C. O'Connell
MONTEREY SELECT BOARD

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SHEFFIELD

MONTEREY GRANGE

The February 15 meeting of Monterey Grange No. 291 was cancelled due to a storm and smoke damage to the hall. Winners of the Valentine making contest were May Clark and Richard Hardisty. Robert Hardisty won the candy guessing contest.

Monterey Grange hosted the Berkshire South Pomona No. 25 at Stockbridge on February 22. On February 24, eight members attended Visiting Officers' Might at Stockbridge Grange No. 295. Tolitha Butler was Guest Master, Mary Wallace Guest Lecturer, Patricia Holohan Guest Ceres, and Alice Shaffer Guest Flora. Committees are working on Grange Week display at the Monterey Post Office for Grange Week in April. Women's Activities Chair Mary Wallace gave out lists of projects and contests. There was a Crazy Pie Contest, and the Most Unusual Pie Contest was a success. Winners were Patricia Holohan for a tropical fruit pie, Florence Janes for her vinegar pie, and Peter Martin for his raisin orange pie. Other entries were Tillie Butler for buttermilk pie, Anne Vickerman for her potato lemon pie, and Alice Shaffer for a vegetable pie. Judges were May Clark, Florence Brown, and Viola Hardisty.

On March 10 four members took part in the conferral of first and second degrees at Stockbridge Grange No. 295. Tolitha Butler was Overseer, Mary Wallace Lecturer, and Elizabeth Slater pianist. Alice Shaffer has been elected to the office of Assistant Secretary.

On March 15 members were treated to a corned beef dinner before the St. Patrick's Day program. Further plans for the Grange Week display were discussed.

The Grange has been invited to a special meeting in Granby, Connecticut, on April 20.

The next meeting will be April 5 with an Easter and educational theme. There will also be a fund-raiser. The Grange is taking applications for new members—won't you join us? We'd love to have you.

— Fraternally,
Mary Wallace, Lecturer

BABY FOXES IN THE SPRING

We have official springtime now, and our weather has opened up, eased off. We can expect, with some certainty, that the days will continue to get longer and warmer. We gardeners are starting our delicate young plants in the house, and out in the woods the wild mammals and birds are starting their delicate young babies. The brief New England warm season is coming, and anything tender has to be timed to take advantage of it.

Red foxes may pair up as early as December, usually with the same mate year after year. (It is probably only the death of a mate which causes a fox to look for a new one.) Once they have paired, the two foxes are inseparable and are quite playful with each other. They also do all their hunting together and use various forms of cooperative strategy, including the one called "tolling," which has been observed in hunting ducks on a pond.

If the ducks are some distance out on the water, one fox will hide in tall grass or brush near the water's edge. The other will prance and yip, cavorting noisily on the shore. Often it will pick up a stick and toss it repeatedly in the air. The ducks will notice and swim a bit nearer; the tolling fox moves inland a little and continues. Finally, the fox is well away from the water and the ducks come out onto the beach, still curious. The one in hiding waits until just the right moment, and then grabs the nearest duck. This trick can be used without a pond, of course, as long as there is cover for the fox in hiding.

After mating in early February, the foxes continue to hunt together until just before the female gives birth. At this time she moves into the den, which is usually an enlarged woodchuck hole with several openings. The most complicated one on record had twenty-three different openings. The main burrow is nine to twelve inches across, and leads down several feet before levelling off and continuing to the nest chamber, as much as fourteen feet farther on. This nest is not usually lined with anything, but is soft and clean and dry on the sandy clay of the subsoil. Here, fifty-one days after mating, the female gives birth to six or seven babies. They are covered with dark, lead-colored fur at birth and their eyes stay closed for about eight days. During this time the mother stays close to them.

The male ("dog fox") does the hunting for the female ("vixen") when the pups are little. She comes up to watch for his return and greets him. One otherwise dispassionate writer says "... at the risk of being accused of anthropomorphism, I will add that the female is happy to welcome him back." He supports this cautious note with an observation: "The female always saw the male coming before I did, but I instantly knew of his approach because the female's body would become taut and she would shiver in anticipation. As the male drew near, the female bounded out to greet him, uttering a loud, high-pitched wail. When she got close to him, she would flop down on her belly, raise her tail up over her back, and wave it furiously. From the prone position she would spring up and kiss the male all over with her tongue, and the male would reciprocate. The male would then pick up whatever food he had dropped during this exchange, and the pair would trot back to the den and the pups." (Leonard Lee Rue III, *The World of the Red Fox*, J. B. Lippincott, 1969)

This drawing, based on one made by Seton in 1902, shows the feet of the red fox. Note that the front foot is larger than the hind, and that it has a fifth toe (which rarely shows up in tracks).

When they are four or five weeks old, the pups will come out of the den. The parents bring food to them and start dropping it farther and farther away, encouraging the pups to look for it, to start "hunting." By August the family splits up, even the male and female, and the den is abandoned until the next spring. The young pups still have the easy weather of late summer and autumn, with lots of insects, berries, apples, grapes, frogs, and earthworms, which are easy to find if the mouse-hunting doesn't go well. By winter they are ready to face the elements and difficult hunting.

Ernest Thompson Seton once followed the trail of a fox in winter and came to the place where it had nosed out a torpid garter snake and bitten it in two, leaving it behind. Later the same fox came upon the night-time nest of two grouse in a snowbank and was able to grab one. As this was much better eating, the fox did not return to the garter snake.

If you should be so lucky as to see a fox, it will probably be hunting mice. You will recognize the "elegance and graceful poses" Seton described over a hundred years ago in Canada:

> Selecting some well-known mouse-haunt, usually a grassy hollow, he advances quietly, looking this way and that for the slightest rustle, alert to the finest sound, tiptoeing, even standing on his hind-legs to see more clearly over the grass. A squeak, or perhaps the movement of the grass-tops, catches his eye, and he springs for the root of the long vibrating spear, slaying with a nip the mouse that he probably does not see, then separates it later from the grass, to chew and swallow the morsel in a few seconds. His movements are full of elegance and his habits of graceful poses. I know of no prettier sight than a Royal Fox, red and rich in his silky new coat with its black velvet facings and its trimmings of silver and gold, as he hunts for mice among the rank foliage and flowers of a prairie hollow in Manitoba.

— Bonner J. McAllester

WILDLIFE SURVEY

Mammals

Moose again! Juliana Raab saw one during the January warm spell. It crossed Route 23 in front of her house and moved down through the woods toward Lake Garfield. Nearby, Dale Duryea saw moose droppings in the field across from his house March 10. The same warm spell brought out a bear a few days earlier that traveled the same route as the moose. A ninety-pound black bear ambled across the road at 6:54 a.m. on the Barnum Flats, March 18, in front of Dale's car.

Deer have been seen all over town: the does will be producing their fawns soon. Dale actually saw a group of five, or possibly more, coyotes bringing down a deer across from his house in the early evening March 14. He drove his car down the driveway to see what all the noise was about and caught the scene in his headlights.

Rabies Note: There are practically no raccoons in our region at present, but the rabies affliction has moved on to skunks, foxes, coyotes (two north of Springfield), and beavers (one in Lanesborough this fall). If you see any mammal acting strangely, dazed, or aggressive, call Dale and don't get near it yourself.

Beavers are out building new dams, and there's heavy mink traffic in the Konkapot. Joe Baker saw a fisher on Monument Mountain Road and a fine healthy fox that leaped over the guardrail on Route 23 near Hupi Road. Rabbits and squirrels are abundant. On a trip to Connecticut on March 10, David McAllester saw seventeen of the latter at the Monterey end of the trip: five of them felt an urgent need to cross the road right in front of his car; two others had failed to make it in front of somebody else's car.

Birds

Loul McIntosh writes from Gould Farm, March 12: "David Markwood has sighted a bunch of cedar waxwings recently. The rain-ice-snowstorm last week brought the following on March 9: red-winged blackbirds, cowbirds, pine siskins... Nothing like stirring up the atmosphere to get some action! Found a way to discourage the squirrels at the feeders, by taking birdseed out only around eight in the morning, instead of filling feeders at night. Suet is much appreciated by hairies, downies, titmice, chickadees, juncos, bluejays.

"The spruce cones filled with food fared as follows: most popular: peanut butter; second: suet and cracked corn; third: suet and mixed seeds; last: suet and thistle seeds. It appeared that the suet lovers didn't like the thistle seeds, and the seed eaters didn't like the suet. Fussy!"

Eleanor Kimberley had a report of a woodcock on the Monument Valley Road, and Barbara Tryon has heard them all week, March 13 to 17, at Lowland Farm. Connie Ohman has seen cock turkeys putting on a courtship display for their hens. Several other flocks were reported. Geese, mallards, and black ducks are on the open water, and a pair of mergansers were spotted on the Farmington River by David McAllester March 10. Dale has a red-tailed hawk getting quite tame around his house this last month, and Anna saw an indigo bunting in their crabapple tree.

David and Bonner McAllester have both heard ravens making their "gong" sound, surely one of the strangest of bird calls. Robins have been back for some time, and the first phoebe at the east end of town was seen March 17.

Insects

A few pale moths, last seen in the January warm spell, are out again in the springlike days of mid-March. Since March 1 there have been zillions of "snow fleas." Andi, Chris and Tess Dunlop saw them in their driveway; they also congregate in pools in the brooks, or on the snow or damp rocks in such numbers that they can be seen from a distance as red or brown coloring, though individually they are only a millimeter long. They are also called springtails; they can bend their tails under and launch themselves into the air with such a snap the eye can't follow. You see them landing a few inches away at the end of their incredible acceleration.

Plants

The early spring signs are everywhere. A succession of different willows have been showing silver flowers, and whole hillsides have taken on soft colors as the sap rises in the millions of twigs. Maple sap is running, and clouds of steam are floating over from the local sugarhouses. The first run has been unusually sweet.

Amphibians

An incursion of rabid newts was seen on the southeast corner of Breakaway Road on April 1, by Loof Lirpa. Please don't try to handle these!

— David P. McAllester

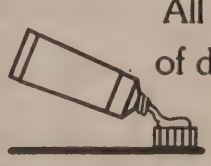
Peter S. Vallianos
Attorney at Law
528-0055

General practice includes real estate purchases, sales, family transfers, and transfers in trust, zoning, land use matters, conservation restrictions landlord-tenant; wills, probate; commercial law.

***

I will meet with you at your home in Monterey.

DR. JERROLD RAAB
Dentist



All phases of dentistry

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Route 23 Monterey

CHURCH NEWS

JOY is in the air! It is in the songs of the birds and in the shoots of green which are making their way to the sunlight. And it is in our hearts as we welcome Rev. Keith Snow into our midst. Keith's first Sunday as pastor was March 26. And since our joy should be shared, on Sunday, April 2, immediately following the church service, there will be a reception to greet him officially. The community is cordially invited to attend and extend a hand of welcome.

His presence will certainly be felt as we prepare for Holy Week and the celebration of Easter Sunday. The schedule of services is listed below.

The Lenten Bible Study will continue Wednesday nights at 7:30 through April 19. Mary and Ray Ward have graciously offered their home as a meeting place, and anyone wishing further information can contact MaryKate Jordan or the Wards.

Schedule of Events for April

Sunday, April 2 Service at 10 a.m., reception for Rev. Keith Snow following.
Wednesday, April 5 Bible Study, 7:30 p.m.
Sunday, April 9 (Palm Sunday) Service at 10 a.m.
Wednesday, April 12 Bible Study, 7:30 p.m.
Thursday, April 13 Maundy Thursday Service with Communion Meal, 6:30 p.m. in Church Social Room.
Sunday, April 16 (Easter Sunday) Sunrise Service at Gould Farm, Church Service at 10 a.m.
Wednesday, April 19 Bible Study, 7:30 p.m.
Sunday, April 23 Service at 10 a.m.
Sunday, April 30 Service at 10 a.m.

A most gracious welcome is extended to one and all to attend any of these services.

CHILDREN'S HEALTH

Through funding of the Department of Education grant, Family Support Network is able to offer feeding and nutrition counseling for anyone having children up to three years old. Nutritionist Debbie Philips-Wikle is available to give this service free. For an appointment or information, contact Debbie at 528-9311.

Here is a listing of events in April:

April 11 Egg hunt, 10 a.m.-12 noon at the Lee Playgroup, First Congregational Church. Free of charge.

April 30 Family Fun Day at Eden Hill Recreation Center, Stockbridge. Picnic, hikes, swimming in pool, games, crafts, clowns, magician, live music, volleyball, scavenger hunt, refreshments, something for children of all ages. Donation: $10 per family, $8 if buttons are purchased before date at playgroups and CHP. Proceeds benefit Family Emergency Needs Fund.

Parent-to-Parent volunteer training will be held in Lee at the First Congregational Church on April 26, May 3, May 10, May 17, and May 24, 10 a.m.–12 noon. Childcare is available if needed. Volunteers will be trained and matched with mothers who are pregnant or have children under two years of age. Volunteers can help with transportation, support, information, and childcare. For an application, contact Claudette at 528-9311.

Children's Health Program and the South Berkshire Task Force on Families and Children will sponsor a workshop led by Joy Milani-Lane, physical therapist, entitled, "Gross Motor Development of Children Aged Birth to Three Years," on April 25, 6:30–8:30 p.m. at Bear Care Center. Childcare will be available. For reservations, please call Claudette, 528-9311. Joy will discuss ways to comfort a crying baby, and activities to stimulate the gross motor development of young children.

We have a new addition to our video lending library, *Budgeting and Handling Money*, a good explanation of ways to set up a budget.

New Marlborough Playgroup will resume meeting on Tuesdays, 9:30–11:30 a.m. at the Southfield Ladies Aid Hall, beginning April 4.

— Claudette Callahan

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COUNCIL ON AGING

The Massachusetts Peer Review Organization (MassPRO) is the federally designated organization to conduct utilization and quality-of-care reviews for the Medicare program. One of the organization's objectives is to educate beneficiaries about Medicare and their rights and responsibilities within the program. Helpful contacts are listed below:

Medicare Part A only
(1-800-252-5533)

- for questions about hospital benefits
- for concerns about hospital bills
- for concerns about quality of care
- to appeal a hospital-issued Notice of Non-Coverage
- to challenge a hospital notice of coverage termination

Medicare Part B only
(1-800-882-1228)

- for explanation of benefits
- for information on outpatient or doctor's office claims

Medex
(1-800-258-2226)

- for questions on supplemental insurance plans
- for coverage issues

The Monterey Council on Aging will host a light luncheon for seniors in the Town Hall basement at noon on Friday, April 21. It will be followed by a brief presentation on flower gardening by Mr. Richard Race, gardener at Chesterwood Museum. All are invited.

The foot clinic scheduled for last month was postponed because of inclement weather. It will be rescheduled for later this spring.

— Pauline Nault

Zen Shiatsu
therapeutic massage
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THE OBSERVER - FEBRUARY

High temp (2/19)	47°
Low temp. (2/7)	-15°
Wind-chilled low temp. (2/5)	-49°
Avg. high temp.	31°
Avg. low temp.	11°
Avg. temp.	21°
Monthly norm. (Pitts.)	22.5°
Precip. occ.	10 days
Total precip.	2.44"
Snowfall	13.5"
Monthly norm. (Pitts.)	2.78"
High bar. press. (2/26)	30.44"
Low bar. press. (2/5)	29.38"
High humidity (2/4)	100%
Low humidity (2/26)	34%
Avg. wind speed	3.25 mph
High wind gust (2/5)	49 mph

NOTICE

The Monterey Town Hall will be closed on Monday, April 17, 1995, for the observance of Patriot's Day. There will be no meeting of the Select Board or the Board of Health that day. The next meeting of these boards is scheduled for Monday, April 24, 1995.

— Peter S. Brown, Chair
Stefan Grotz
Georgiana C. O'Connell
Monterey Select Board

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OR CALL FOR MORE INFORMATION

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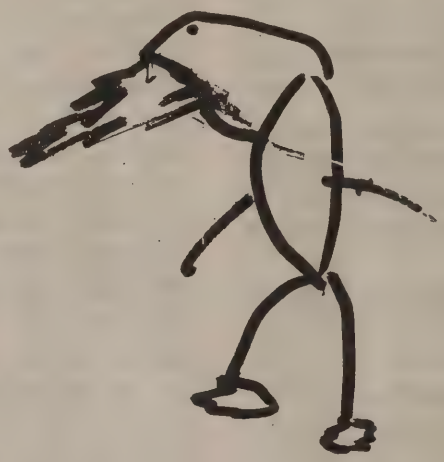
PUTTING OUT THE FIRE

Volunteer firefighters form a group like no other. Likely motivations for volunteering come readily to mind: the action, danger, and excitement; the trappings (lights and sirens, big trucks, mechanical stuff, outfits); the human bonds (command, camaraderie, teamwork, a loyalty bred on the fireground that transcends everyday associations); overall, gratitude received for help freely given. It's a catalogue of wildly varied impulses that play in every person differently, and differently in the same person at different times. Volunteer firefighters combine extremes of base and lofty motivation to form an extreme of neighborliness, a will to help running very deep close to home. It is old-fashioned, and its expression may sound corny to the modern ear, but it remains a powerful motivating force in Monterey among those who handle the hoses when your house catches fire, or hold your hand and thump your chest when you are stricken, or lift your bloodied, broken body onto a stretcher when your car goes off the road. These things happen, and these people respond.

Monterey has had a remarkably strong and effective fire company for a long time. Ray Tryon succeeded his father Wallace as Fire Chief in 1953, and remains Chief today. His son Leigh, now Assistant Chief, was fighting fires before he was licensed to drive. Leigh's son Shawn is counting the days until his thirteenth birthday this spring, when he will become a junior member of the Monterey Fire Company.

The company is more than its leaders. An eighteen-year-old member of three years' standing who might have joined the fire department of a neighboring town (he lives a few feet on the *other* side of the town line) said he chose Monterey because he found the members here "kinder," and "the best-trained around." He liked the pride he found in the Monterey company, the care taken of equipment, the will to be more than just good at the job, to be the best. He said Monterey alone among nearby companies does not allow alcoholic beverages in the firehouse. The organization that drew this proud volunteer to Monterey was built over many years.



Fire science came to Monterey in the middle 1970s, when members began learning how to attack fires from within a structure using little water, and how to vent through the roof. Scott Air Packs (back-pack breathing apparatus used in smoky close quarters) became the order of the day. No more pouring water on a burning building from across the yard.

Between 1975 and 1980, the town raised and appropriated money for two new trucks. The independent, non-profit corporate entity called the Monterey Fire Company, Ltd., was established by its members on July 4, 1980, and built itself a new firehouse with its own money and perhaps as large and diverse a membership as it has ever had. In addition to firefighting and construction, the company grilled steaks for the whole town in the summer, and managed a few gravity car races in the early fall. Town meetings relocated to the new firehouse.

The company continued to train and drill a fluctuating membership. There were always enough firemen in town on weekdays to respond effectively. (Weekday response is the Achilles heel of small-town volunteer companies.)

Today there are eighteen full members, and one inactive member who remains on the roster. Within the past year or so, two members have drifted off without officially quitting; one of the two has recently returned to practice, although work frequently places him out of town on weekdays. Two have formally resigned for personal reasons having to do with health, demands on time, the fit of personalities within the group. In the long view, this is typical attrition for typical reasons, more of the status quo short that rules the lives of volunteers the same as it does the rest of our lives; some move on, new members join. Of the eighteen current members, six have joined within the past three years; the four who left or drifted recently were veterans of at least ten years' experience.

At Town Meeting last spring, voters approved a bylaw establishing a "real estate tax exemption program for residents of the Town serving as members of the Volunteer Fire Department." The exemption applies to real estate "occupied and owned by such individual as his

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or her domicile, or…owned by a member of the immediate family." There is a $1,500 limit on the value of the exemption. Adoption of the bylaw, which requires enabling legislation from the statehouse, took four years. Those in the fire company who developed the program see it as an "honor" and a "privilege" to be recognized in this way. They compare it to the state program that establishes a special tax rate on agricultural lands as a means of preservation. It is a covenant, a structural acknowledgment of the value of voluntary fire service. They also see the exemption as an incentive for firefighters to become resident owners in Monterey, building durability into the fire company by their commitment to place.

In this way the tax exemption program is "not about money." While the saving is not insignificant, the money it represents would be an "insult" offered as market-value pay for services rendered. Still, the program does not benefit all firefighters in good standing—particularly, those who don't own a home here. Further, the monetary value of the exemption may be gravy to one and a make-or-break boon to another. Some feel that this is unfair, that simple compensation (even a token amount) for those who maintain good standing is the only way to be fair; others feel that fairness is impossible any way you cut it, and that *any* quid pro quo remuneration undermines the voluntarism at the heart of the Monterey Fire Company. The group has hashed this over in recent meetings. Now the debate is focused on the merits of various measures the fire company might undertake on its own to help members *become* Monterey homeowners.

For Fiscal Year 1996 (beginning this July) twelve of the eighteen active Monterey volunteers are qualified by their good standing to receive the exemption. (Qualifying criteria include a certain high level of attendance at regular training, and a similar high level of response to calls.) Six members are excluded for various reasons: two live out of town, one is a member of a family already receiving the exemption, and three are not Monterey homeowners. All six are members in good standing; none has expressed an intention to leave the company.

We come to the bottom line. There have been two major structural fires in Monterey since last Christmas. Rapid response and a skillful attack at both fires has limited property damage. No one was hurt.

— Peter Murkett

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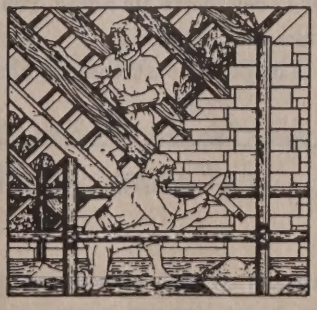

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TALES FROM TEXAS

More People and Their Sayings

Guess we better go on home, 'fore the river rises.

— Alfred ("Old Man"/"Daddy") Weber

I found Mike Friedman at the Valley Mills Feed Store, where I went before we got our chickens to ask whether they sold yard eggs. "No," said the clerk. "Do you sell day-old chicks," I asked. She said, "No, but we sell horses." "Okay," I said, "we're looking for some horses, too." She wrote down Mike's name and number. I called the number, and before our first conversation was over I was scribbling down examples of the way Mike talks. We bought two horses Mike recommended (the now famous Whiskey and Banchee), and our colloquy with Mike continues to this day.

It turns out that Mike had signed on as a wrangler for the K Bar right out of high school, and had worked here until the ranch became involved in a lengthy partition process which held up cattle work and salary payments too long for a young cowboy to wait around. He went to work at the A & M Experimental Station, but loves a chance to come back to the K Bar.

When Whiskey acted up with the kids who rode him here, Mike came over and rode him around the South Pasture at a walk for a couple of hours. After Whiskey reared up with me during the Fall Roundup, Mike picked him up and put him in reform school for a few weeks at his own stable. This led to much talk about what Mike calls "boogery" horses:

I've got a horse that I've "blowed up" in the ropin' box. You've got to get their brain back to earth. They're plum goofy. People buy a horse from me and try to see what his brain'll take. They find themselves wadded up on the ground. They send him back and say, "My horse has blowed up." Most of 'em people want to ride have to be a dead horse. I call it a dead horse. He's dead. You have to stir him up with a stick.

A lady called me to come get a horse and sell it for her. A skinny old horse she had in her back yard. I went over, and there's a dog running about, a little girl straying under the horse's feet. Horse ain't made a bobble, now. I get on and that horse swallered his head. He bucked all over that yard. I told the lady I couldn't get the price she wanted for the horse. She thowed a wall-eyed hissy fit.

I listen spellbound to Mike's descriptive prose. He talks the way an addict takes a drug: his talking makes him want to keep on talking. He is short and stocky with round cheeks, blond hair curling down his neck, and an incongruous Fu Manchu mustache. He giggles at himself now and then ("heee-hee") and looks like Bugs Bunny playing Genghis Khan.

For a nippy horse you take a piece of leather. Put one piece over top of the other one. In between, run out two little upholstery tacks. Put it on the back part of your hand. Flunk it against his neck when he goes to nip. They never see you hit 'em.

One horse I had, he was always a little wiry. He was a Leo-bred horse. You could tell by the way he held his head on his neck. You couldn't kill him with a hammer. He was bred with heart. An old ranch horse'll look at a cow. But he ain't gonna stand on his back feet and spin like that horse would.

Mike has furnished us with a fine assortment of creative pronunciations

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along with his narratives. He follows a trend widespread in Bosque County of agglutinating suffixes ("The mainest thing is..." "It had the most beautifulest markings..." and "It would be more funner."). But he also goes off on his own trails ("I went to an offeren hunt last weekend. They send these offerens from all around the state to hunt in South Texas..." "I'll eat okra fried, but I won't eat bald okra.")

Mike was the only one (of many who tried) who successfully got Peaches, our elephantine Belgian filly, to move ahead in harness. Later, when we were planning to hook her and her mother to a wagon, I was speculating about the risks. I said, "Peaches probably won't do anything bad." "She ortent to," said Mike.

You'll hear more about Mike and his oratorical jewels in the column on "Cowboys" next month. Which reminds me: I thought Glen Weber's brother Joel's name was "Jewel," by the way Mike pronounced it, until somebody set me straight a long time later.

— Miss El

CALENDAR

Sundays, AA meetings, 9 a.m. in the Monterey Firehouse, Main Road.

Wednesday, April 5 Meeting of the Monterey Grange No. 291, 8 p.m. at the Grange Hall.

Tuesday, April 18 Free blood pressure clinic, 9–10:30 a.m. in the basement room of the Monterey Grange (town offices), Main Road.

Wednesday, Ap[ril 19 Meeting of the Southern Berkshire Solid Waste District, 7 p.m. in the church basement.

Friday, April 21 Light luncheon for seniors, followed by Richard Race of Chesterwood Museum speaking on flower gardening, Town Hall basement, 12 noon.

Saturday, April 22 Square and contradance at the Sheffield Grange, Route 7, Sheffield, 8:30–11:30 p.m. Music by Mountain Laurel, calling by Joe Baker. All dances taught, beginners and children welcome. Refreshments. Adults $5, children $2. Information: 413-528-9385 or 518-329-7578.

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CORRECTION

We erroneously reported a month ago that Mick Burns scored all four of the Blades' goals to beat Out of Bounds in the Blizzard Cup Hockey Tournament. It was Phil Newey who scored first for the Blades, and Mick who followed up with three more in the OT 4-3 win.

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We invite readers to submit letters, news items, opinions, stories, poetry, drawings, and photographs. Please send submissions by the fifteenth of the month before publication, addressed to the attention of the Editor.

Send any change of address, or initial request to receive the *News* by mail to Susan LePrevost, Business Manager.

Address your request for advertising rates and information to the Editor. For further information, telephone the Editor at 413-528-3454 evenings, or 528-9937 days.

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Contributions from local artists this month: Sudi Baker, p 22; Erika Crofut, pp. 12, 13, 18, 23; Bonner McAllester, p. 16; Riley Murkett, p. 20.

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